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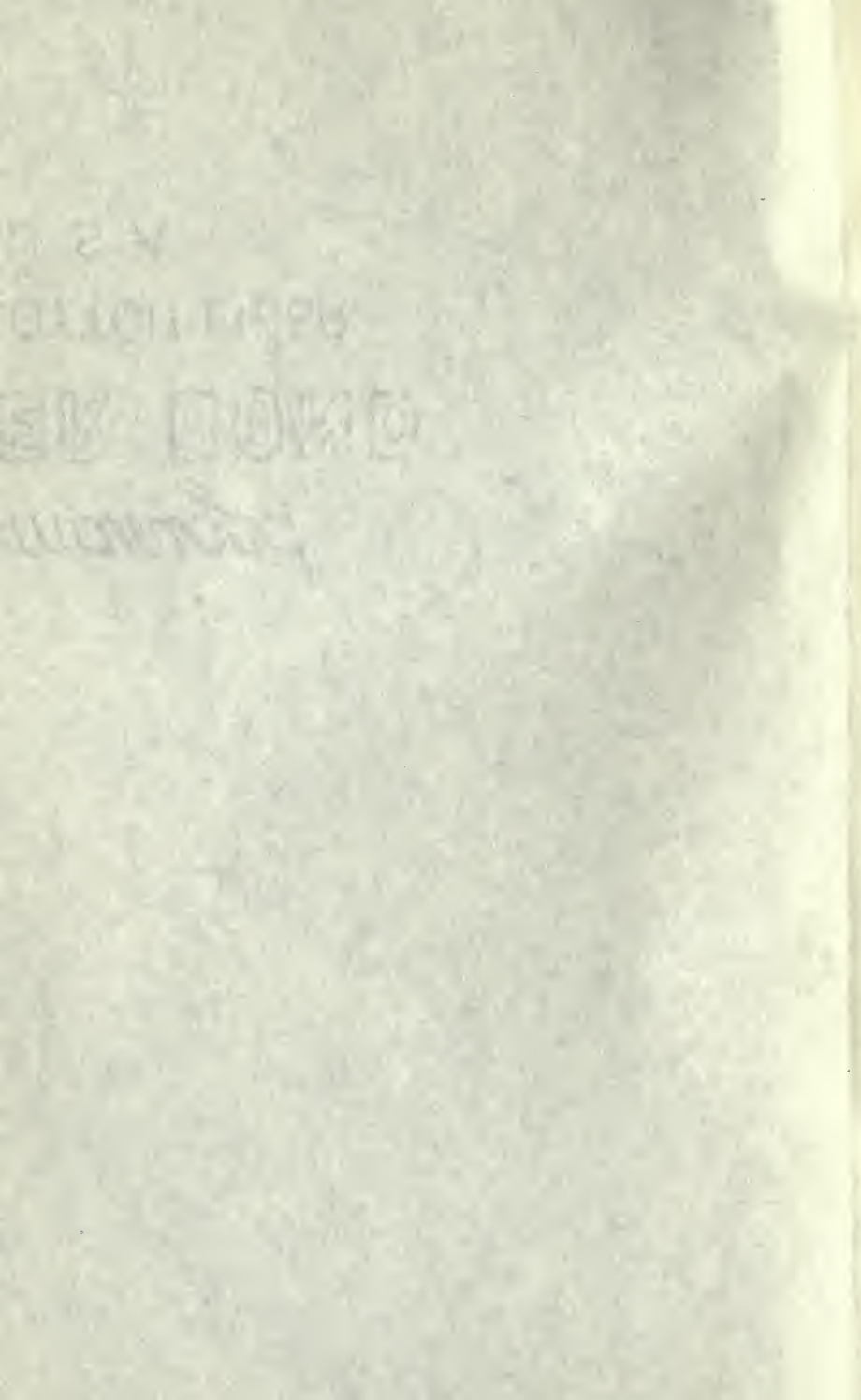
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THE RELATION  
BETWEEN  
MICHAEL ANGELO  
AND  
TINTORET.

SEVENTH OF THE COURSE OF  
LECTURES ON SCULPTURE

DELIVERED AT OXFORD, 1870-71,

BY  
JOHN RUSKIN,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRISTCHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART.



LONDON : PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR  
BY SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE,  
AND SOLD BY  
MR. G. ALLEN, HEATHFIELD COTTAGE, KESTON, KENT.  
1872.

*Price One Shilling.*



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I HAVE printed this Lecture separately, that strangers visiting the Galleries may be able to use it for reference to the drawings. But they must observe that its business is only to point out what is to be blamed in Michael Angelo, and that it assumes the facts of his power to be generally known. Mr. Tyrwhitt's statement of these, in his "Lectures on Christian Art," will put the reader into possession of all that may justly be alleged in honour of him.

*Corpus Christi College, 1st May, 1872.*



THE RELATION  
BETWEEN  
MICHAEL ANGELO AND TINTORET.

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*The Seventh of the Course of Lectures on Sculpture  
delivered at Oxford, 1870-71.*

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IN preceding lectures on sculpture I have included references to the art of painting, so far as it proposes to itself the same object as sculpture, (idealization of form) ; and I have chosen for the subject of our closing inquiry, the works of the two masters who accomplished or implied the unity of these arts. Tintoret entirely conceives his figures as solid statues : sees them in his mind on every side ; detaches each from the other by imagined air and light ; and foreshortens, interposes, or involves them, as if they were pieces of clay in his hand. On the contrary, Michael Angelo conceives his sculpture partly as if it were painted ; and using (as I told you formerly) his pen like a chisel, uses also his chisel like a pencil ; is sometimes as

picturesque as Rembrandt, and sometimes as soft as Correggio.

It is of him chiefly that I shall speak to-day ; both because it is part of my duty to the strangers here present to indicate for them some of the points of interest in the drawings forming part of the University collections ; but still more, because I must not allow the second year of my professorship to close, without some statement of the mode in which those collections may be useful or dangerous to my pupils. They seem at present little likely to be either ; for since I entered on my duties, no student has ever asked me a single question respecting these drawings, or, so far as I could see, taken the slightest interest in them.

There are several causes for this which might be obviated—there is one which cannot be. The collection, as exhibited at present, includes a number of copies which mimic in variously injurious ways the characters of Michael Angelo's own work ; and the series, except as material for reference, can be of no practical service until these are withdrawn, and placed by themselves. It includes, besides, a number of original drawings which are indeed of value to any laborious student of Michael Angelo's life and temper ; but which owe the greater part of this interest to their being executed in times of sickness or indolence, when the master, however strong, was failing in his

purpose, and, however diligent, tired of his work. It will be enough to name, as an example of this class, the sheet of studies for the Medici tombs, No. 45, in which the lowest figure is, strictly speaking, neither a study nor a working drawing, but has either been scrawled in the feverish languor of exhaustion, which cannot escape its subject of thought ; or, at best, in idly experimental addition of part to part, beginning with the head, and fitting muscle after muscle, and bone after bone to it, thinking of their place only, not their proportion, till the head is only about one twentieth part of the height of the body : finally, something between a face and a mask is blotted in the upper left-hand corner of the paper, indicative, in the weakness and frightfulness of it, simply of mental disorder from overwork ; and there are several others of this kind, among even the better drawings of the collection, which ought never to be exhibited to the general public.

It would be easy, however, to separate these, with the acknowledged copies, from the rest ; and, doing the same with the drawings of Raphael, among which a larger number are of true value, to form a connected series of deep interest to artists, in illustration of the incipient and experimental methods of design practised by each master.

I say, to artists. Incipient methods of design are not, and ought not to be, subjects of earnest inquiry

to other people: and although the re-arrangement of the drawings would materially increase the chance of their gaining due attention, there is a final and fatal reason for the want of interest in them displayed by the younger students;—namely, that these designs have nothing whatever to do with present life, with its passions, or with its religion. What their historic value is, and relation to the life of the past, I will endeavour, so far as time admits, to explain to-day.

The course of Art divides itself hitherto, among all nations of the world that have practised it successfully, into three great periods.

The first, that in which their conscience is undeveloped, and their condition of life in many respects savage; but, nevertheless, in harmony with whatever conscience they possess. The most powerful tribes, in this stage of their intellect, usually live by rapine, and under the influence of vivid, but contracted, religious imagination. The early predatory activity of the Normans, and the confused minglings of religious subjects with scenes of hunting, war, and vile grotesque, in their first art, will sufficiently exemplify this state of a people; having, observe, their conscience undeveloped, but keeping their conduct in satisfied harmony with it.

The second stage is that of the formation of conscience by the discovery of the true laws of social



order and personal virtue, coupled with sincere effort to live by such laws as they are discovered.

All the Arts advance steadily during this stage of national growth, and are lovely, even in their deficiencies, as the buds of flowers are lovely by their vital force, swift change, and continent beauty.

The third stage is that in which the conscience is entirely formed, and the nation, finding it painful to live in obedience to the precepts it has discovered, looks about to discover, also, a compromise for obedience to them. In this condition of mind its first endeavour is nearly always to make its religion pompous, and please the gods by giving them gifts and entertainments, in which it may piously and pleasurably share itself; so that a magnificent display of the powers of art it has gained by sincerity, takes place for a few years, and is then followed by their extinction, rapid and complete exactly in the degree in which the nation resigns itself to hypocrisy.

The works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Tintoret, belong to this period of compromise in the career of the greatest nation of the world; and are the most splendid efforts yet made by human creatures to maintain the dignity of states with beautiful colours, and defend the doctrines of theology with anatomical designs.

Farther, and as an universal principle, we have to remember that the Arts express not only the moral

temper, but the scholarship, of their age ; and we have thus to study them under the influence, at the same moment of, it may be, declining probity, and advancing science.

Now in this the Arts of Northern and Southern Europe stand exactly opposed. The Northern temper never accepts the Catholic faith with force such as it reached in Italy. Our sincerest thirteenth century sculpture is cold and formal compared with that of the Pisani ; nor can any Northern poet be set for an instant beside Dante, as an exponent of Catholic faith : on the contrary, the Northern temper accepts the scholarship of the Reformation with absolute sincerity, while the Italians seek refuge from it in the partly scientific and completely lascivious enthusiasms of literature and painting, renewed under classical influence. We therefore, in the north, produce our Shakspeare and Holbein ; they their Petrarch and Raphael. And it is nearly impossible for you to study Shakspeare or Holbein too much, or Petrarch and Raphael too little.

I do not say this, observe, in opposition to the Catholic faith, or to any other faith, but only to the attempts to support whatsoever the faith may be, by ornament or eloquence, instead of action. Every man who honestly accepts, and acts upon, the knowledge granted to him by the circumstances of his time, has the faith which God intends him to have ;



—assuredly a good one, whatever the terms or form of it—every man who dishonestly refuses, or interestedly disobeys the knowledge open to him, holds a faith which God does not mean him to hold, and therefore a bad one, however beautiful or traditionally respectable.

Do not, therefore, I entreat you, think that I speak with any purpose of defending one system of theology against another; least of all, reformed against Catholic theology. There probably never was a system of religion so destructive to the loveliest arts and the loveliest virtues of men, as the modern Protestantism, which consists in an assured belief in the Divine forgiveness of all your sins, and the Divine correctness of all your opinions. But in their first searching and sincere activities, the doctrines of the Reformation produced the most instructive art, and the grandest literature, yet given to the world; while Italy, in her interested resistance to those doctrines, polluted and exhausted the arts she already possessed. Her iridescence of dying statesmanship—her magnificence of hollow piety, were represented in the arts of Venice and Florence by two mighty men on either side—Titian and Tintoret,—Michael Angelo and Raphael. Of the calm and brave statesmanship, the modest and faithful religion, which had been her strength, I am content to name one chief representative artist at Venice, John Bellini.

Let me now map out for you roughly, the chronological relations of these five men. It is impossible to remember the minor years, in dates; I will give you them broadly in decades, and you can add what finesse afterwards you like.

Recollect, first, the great year 1480. Twice four's eight—you can't mistake it. In that year Michael Angelo was five years old; Titian, three years old; Raphael, within three years of being born.

So see how easily it comes. Michael Angelo five years old—and you divide six between Titian and Raphael,—three on each side of your standard year, 1480.

Then add to 1480, forty years—an easy number to recollect, surely; and you get the exact year of Raphael's death, 1520.

In that forty years all the new effort, and deadly catastrophe took place. 1480 to 1520.

Now, you have only to fasten to those forty years, the life of Bellini, who represents the best art before them, and of Tintoret, who represents the best art after them.

I cannot fit you these on with a quite comfortable exactness, but with very slight inexactness I can fit them firmly.

John Bellini was ninety years old when he died. He lived fifty years before the great forty of change,

and he saw the forty, and died. Then Tintoret is born; lives eighty\* years after the forty, and closes, in dying, the sixteenth century, and the great arts of the world.

Those are the dates, roughly; now for the facts connected with them.

John Bellini precedes the change, meets, and resists it victoriously to his death. Nothing of flaw or failure is ever to be discerned in him.

Then Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian, together, bring about the deadly change, playing into each other's hands—Michael Angelo being the chief captain in evil; Titian, in natural force.

Then Tintoret, himself alone nearly as strong as all the three, stands up for a last fight, for Venice, and the old time. He all but wins it at first; but the three together are too strong for him. Michael Angelo strikes him down; and the arts are ended. "Il disegno di Michel Agnolo." That fatal motto was his death-warrant.

And now, having massed out my subject, I can clearly sketch for you the changes that took place from Bellini, through Michael Angelo, to Tintoret.

The art of Bellini is centrally represented by two

\* If you like to have it with perfect exactitude, recollect that Bellini died at true ninety, — Tintoret at eighty-two; that Bellini's death was four years before Raphael's, and that Tintoret was born four years before Bellini's death.

pictures at Venice : one, the Madonna in the Sacristy of the Frari, with two saints beside her, and two angels at her feet ; the second, the Madonna with four Saints, over the second altar of San Zaccaria.

In the first of these, the figures are under life size, and it represents the most perfect kind of picture for rooms ; in which, since it is intended to be seen close to the spectator, every right kind of finish possible to the hand may be wisely lavished ; yet which is not a miniature, nor in any wise petty, or ignoble.

In the second, the figures are of life size, or a little more, and it represents the class of great pictures in which the boldest execution is used, but all brought to entire completion. These two, having every quality in balance, are as far as my present knowledge extends, and as far as I can trust my judgment, the two best pictures in the world.

Observe respecting them—

First, they are both wrought in entirely consistent and permanent material. The gold in them is represented by painting, not laid on with real gold. And the painting is so secure, that four hundred years have produced on it, so far as I can see, no harmful change whatsoever, of any kind.

Secondly, the figures in both are in perfect peace. No action takes place except that the little angels are playing on musical instruments, but with uninter-

rupted and effortless gesture, as in a dream. A choir of singing angels by La Robbia or Donatello would be intent on their music, or eagerly rapturous in it, as in temporary exertion : in the little choirs of cherubs by Luini in the Adoration of the Shepherds, in the Cathedral of Como, we even feel by their dutiful anxiety that there might be danger of a false note if they were less attentive. But Bellini's angels, even the youngest, sing as calmly as the Fates weave.

Let me at once point out to you that this calmness is the attribute of the entirely highest class of art : the introduction of strong or violently emotional incident is at once a confession of inferiority.

Those are the two first attributes of the best art. Faultless workmanship, and perfect serenity ; a continuous, not momentary, action,—or entire inaction. You are to be interested in the living creatures ; not in what is happening to them.

Then the third attribute of the best art is that it compels you to think of the spirit of the creature, and therefore of its face, more than of its body.

And the fourth is that in the face, you shall be led to see only beauty or joy ;—never vileness, vice, or pain.

Those are the four essentials of the greatest art. I repeat them, they are easily learned.

I. Faultless and permanent workmanship.



2. Serenity in state or action.
3. The Face principal, not the body.
4. And the Face free from either vice or pain.

It is not possible, of course, always literally to observe the second condition, that there shall be quiet action or none ; but Bellini's treatment of violence in action you may see exemplified in a notable way in his St. Peter Martyr. The soldier is indeed striking the sword down into his breast ; but in the face of the Saint is only resignation, and faintness of death, not pain—that of the executioner is impassive ; and, while a painter of the later schools would have covered breast and sword with blood, Bellini allows no stain of it ; but pleases himself by the most elaborate and exquisite painting of a soft crimson feather in the executioner's helmet.

Now the changes brought about by Michael Angelo—and permitted, or persisted in calamitously, by Tintoret—are in the four points these :

1st. Bad workmanship.

The greater part of all that these two men did is hastily and incompletely done ; and all that they did on a large scale in colour is in the best qualities of it perished.

2nd. Violence of transitional action.

The figures flying,—falling,—striking, or biting.

Scenes of Judgment, — battle, — martyrdom, — massacre ; anything that is in the acme of instantaneous interest and violent gesture. They cannot any more trust their public to care for anything but that.

3rd. Physical instead of mental interest. The body, and its anatomy, made the entire subject of interest : the face, shadowed, as in the Duke Lorenzo,\* unfinished, as in the Twilight, or entirely foreshortened, backshortened, and despised, among labyrinths of limbs, and mountains of sides and shoulders.

4th. Evil chosen rather than good. On the face itself, instead of joy or virtue, at the best, sadness, probably pride, often sensuality, and always, by preference, vice or agony as the subject of thought. In the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, and the Last Judgment of Tintoret, it is the wrath of the Dies Iræ, not its justice, in which they delight ; and their only passionate thought of the coming of Christ in the clouds, is that all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.

Those are the four great changes wrought by Michael Angelo. I repeat them :

Ill work for good.

Tumult for Peace.

The Flesh of Man for his Spirit.

And the Curse of God for His Blessing.

\* Julian, rather. See Mr. Tyrwhitt's notice of the lately discovered error, in his Lectures on *Christian Art*.

Hitherto, I have massed, necessarily, but most unjustly, Michael Angelo and Tintoret together, because of their common relation to the art of others. I shall now proceed to distinguish the qualities of their own. And first as to the general temper of the two men.

Nearly every existing work by Michael Angelo is an attempt to execute something beyond his power, coupled with a fevered desire that his power may be acknowledged. He is always matching himself either against the Greeks whom he cannot rival, or against rivals whom he cannot forget. He is proud, yet not proud enough to be at peace; melancholy, yet not deeply enough to be raised above petty pain; and strong beyond all his companion workmen, yet never strong enough to command his temper, or limit his aims.

Tintoret, on the contrary, works in the consciousness of supreme strength, which cannot be wounded by neglect, and is only to be thwarted by time and space. He knows precisely all that art can accomplish under given conditions; determines absolutely how much of what can be done, he will himself for the moment choose to do; and fulfils his purpose with as much ease as if, through his human body, were working the great forces of nature. Not that he is ever satisfied with what he has done, as vulgar and feeble artists are satisfied. He falls



short of his ideal, more than any other man ; but not more than is necessary ; and is content to fall short of it to that degree, as he is content that his figures, however well painted, do not move nor speak. He is also entirely unconcerned respecting the satisfaction of the public. He neither cares to display his strength to them, nor convey his ideas to them ; when he finishes his work, it is because he is in the humour to do so ; and the sketch which a meaner painter would have left incomplete to show how cleverly it was begun, Tintoret simply leaves because he has done as much of it as he likes.

Both Raphael and Michael Angelo are thus, in the most vital of all points, separate from the great Venetian. They are always in dramatic attitudes, and always appealing to the public for praise. They are the leading athletes in the gymnasium of the arts ; and the crowd of the circus cannot take its eyes away from them, while the Venetian walks or rests with the simplicity of a wild animal ; is scarcely noticed in his occasionally swifter motion ; when he springs, it is to please himself ; and so calmly, that no one thinks of estimating the distance covered.

I do not praise him wholly in this. I praise him only for the well-founded pride, infinitely nobler than Michael Angelo's. You do not hear of Tintoret's putting any one into hell because they had found fault with his work. Tintoret would as soon have

thought of putting a dog into hell for laying his paws on it. But he is to be blamed in this—that he thinks as little of the pleasure of the public, as of their opinion. A great painter's business is to do what the public ask of him, in the way that shall be helpful and instructive to them. His relation to them is exactly that of a tutor to a child; he is not to defer to their judgment, but he is carefully to form it;—not to consult their pleasure for his own sake, but to consult it much for theirs. It was scarcely, however, possible that this should be the case between Tintoret and his Venetians; he could not paint for the people, and in some respects he was happily protected by his subordination to the senate. Raphael and Michael Angelo lived in a world of court intrigue, in which it was impossible to escape petty irritation, or refuse themselves the pleasure of mean victory. But Tintoret and Titian, even at the height of their reputation, practically lived as craftsmen in their workshops, and sent in samples of their wares, not to be praised or cavilled at, but to be either taken or refused.

I can clearly and adequately set before you these relations between the great painters of Venice and her senate—relations which, in monetary matters, are entirely right and exemplary for all time—by reading to you two decrees of the Senate itself, and one petition to it. The first document shall be the

decree of the Senate for giving help to John Bellini, in finishing the compartments of the great Council Chamber; granting him three assistants—one of them Victor Carpaccio.

The decree, first referring to some other business, closes in these terms : \*

“There having moreover offered his services to this effect our most faithful citizen, Zuan Bellin, according to his agreement employing his skill and all speed and diligence for the completion of this work of the three pictures aforesaid, provided he be assisted by the under written painters.

“Be it therefore put to the ballot, that besides the aforesaid Zuan Bellin in person, who will assume the superintendence of this work, there be added Master Victor Scarpaza, with a monthly salary of five ducats; Master Victor, son of the late Mathio, at four ducats per month; and the painter, Hieronymo, at two ducats per month; they rendering speedy and diligent assistance to the aforesaid Zuan Bellin for the painting of the pictures aforesaid, so that they be completed well and carefully as speedily as possible. The salaries of the which three master painters aforesaid, with the costs of colours and other necessities, to be defrayed by our Salt office with the monies of the great chest.

“It being expressly declared that said pensioned painters be tied and bound to work constantly and daily, so that said three pictures may be completed as expe-

\* From the invaluable series of documents relating to Titian and his times, extricated by Mr. Rawdon Brown from the archives of Venice, and arranged and translated by him.

ditiously as possible ; the artists aforesaid being pensioned at the good pleasure of this Council.

“ Ayes ..... 23  
 “ Noes ..... 3  
 “ Neutrals..... 0 ”

This decree is the more interesting to us now, because it is the precedent to which Titian himself refers, when he first offers his services to the Senate.

The petition which I am about to read to you, was read to the Council of Ten, on the last day of May, 1513, and the original draft of it is yet preserved in the Venice archives.

“ ‘ Most Illustrious Council of Ten.

“ ‘ Most Serene Prince and most Excellent Lords.

“ ‘ I, Titian of Serviete de Cadore, having from my boyhood upwards set myself to learn the art of painting, not so much from cupidity of gain as for the sake of endeavouring to acquire some little fame, and of being ranked amongst those who now profess the said art.

“ ‘ And altho heretofore, and likewise at this present, I have been earnestly requested by the Pope and other potentates to go and serve them, nevertheless, being anxious as your Serenity’s most faithful subject, for such I am, to leave some memorial in this famous city ; my determination is, should the Signory approve, *to undertake, so long as I live, to come and paint in the Grand Council with my whole soul and ability ;* commencing, provided your Serenity think of it, with the battle-piece on the side towards the “ Piazza,” that being the most difficult ; nor

down to this time has any one chosen to assume so hard a task.

“ ‘ I, most excellent Lords, should be better pleased to receive as recompence for the work to be done by me, such acknowledgments as may be deemed sufficient, and much less ; but because, as already stated by me, I care solely for my honour, and mere livelihood, should your Serenity approve, you will vouchsafe to grant me for my life, the next brokers-patent in the German factory,\* by whatever means it may become vacant ; notwithstanding other expectancies ; with the terms, conditions, obligations, and exemptions, as in the case of Messer Zuan Bellini ; besides two youths, whom I purpose bringing with me as assistants ; they to be paid by the Salt office ; as likewise the colours and all other requisites, as conceded a few months ago by the aforesaid most Illustrious Council to the said Messer Zuan ; for I promise to do such work and with so much speed and excellency as shall satisfy your Lordships to whom I humbly recommend myself.’ ”

“ This proposal,” Mr. Brown tells us, “ in accordance with the petitions presented by Gentil Bellini and Alvise Vivarini, was immediately put to the ballot,” and carried thus—the decision of the Grand Council, in favour of Titian, being, observe, by no means unanimous :—

“ Ayes .....	10
“ Noes .....	6
“ Neutrals .....	0”

\* Fondaco de Tedeschi. I saw the last wrecks of Giorgione’s frescoes on the outside of it in 1845.



Immediately follows on the acceptance of Titian's services, this practical order :

“We, Chiefs of the most Illustrious Council of Ten, tell and inform you Lords Proveditors for the State ; videlicet the one who is cashier of the Great Chest, and his successors, that for the execution of what has been decreed above in the most Illustrious Council aforesaid, you do have prepared all necessities for the above written Titian according to his petition and demand, and as observed with regard to Juan Bellini, that he may paint *ut supra* ; paying from month to month the two youths whom said Titian shall present to you at the rate of four ducats each per month, as urged by him because of their skill and sufficiency in said art of painting, tho' we do not mean the payment of their salary to commence until they begin work ; and thus will you do. Given on the 8th of June, 1513.”

That is the way, then, great workmen wish to be paid, and that is the way wise men pay them for their work. The perfect simplicity of such patronage leaves the painter free to do precisely what he thinks best : and a good painter always produces his best, with such license.

And now I shall take the four conditions of change in succession, and examine the distinctions between the two masters in their acceptance of, or resistance to, them.

I. The change of good and permanent workmanship for bad and insecure workmanship.

You have often heard quoted the saying of Michael Angelo, that oil-painting was only fit for women and children.

He said so, simply because he had neither the skill to lay a single touch of good oil-painting, nor the patience to overcome even its elementary difficulties.

And it is one of my reasons for the choice of subject in this concluding lecture on Sculpture, that I may, with direct reference to this much quoted saying of Michael Angelo, make the positive statement to you, that oil-painting is the Art of arts;\* that it is sculpture, drawing, and music, all in one, involving the technical dexterities of those three several arts; that is to say—the decision and strength of the stroke of the chisel;—the balanced distribution of appliance of that force necessary for gradation in light and shade;—and the passionate felicity of rightly multiplied actions, all unerring, which on an instrument produce right sound, and on canvas, living colour. There is no other human skill so great or so wonderful as the skill of fine oil-painting; and there is no other art whose results

\* I beg that this statement may be observed with attention. It is of great importance, as in opposition to the views usually held respecting the grave schools of painting.

are so absolutely permanent. Music is gone as soon as produced—marble discolours,—fresco fades,—glass darkens or decomposes—painting alone, well guarded, is practically everlasting.

Of this splendid art Michael Angelo understood nothing; he understood even fresco, imperfectly. Tintoret understood both perfectly; but he—when no one would pay for his colours, (and sometimes nobody would even give him space of wall to paint on)—used cheap blue for ultramarine; and he worked so rapidly, and on such huge spaces of canvas, that between damp and dry, his colours must go, for the most part; but any complete oil-painting of his stands as well as one of Bellini's own: while Michael Angelo's fresco is defaced already in every part of it, and Lionardo's oil-painting is all either gone black, or gone to nothing.

II. Introduction of dramatic interest for the sake of excitement. I have already, in the *Stones of Venice*, illustrated Tintoret's dramatic power at so great length, that I will not, to-day, make any farther statement to justify my assertion that it is as much beyond Michael Angelo's as Shakspeare's is beyond Milton's—and somewhat with the same kind of difference in manner. Neither can I speak to-day, time not permitting me, of the abuse of their dramatic power by Venetian or Florentine;



one thing only I beg you to note, that with full half of his strength, Tintoret remains faithful to the serenity of the past; and the examples I have given you from his work in S. 50,\* are, one, of the most splendid drama, and the other of the quietest portraiture, ever attained by the arts of the middle ages.

Note also this respecting his picture of the Judgment, that, in spite of all the violence and wildness of the imagined scene, Tintoret has not given, so far as I remember, the spectacle of any one soul under infliction of actual pain. In all previous representations of the Last Judgment there had at least been one division of the picture set apart for the representation of torment; and even the gentle Angelico shrinks from no orthodox detail in this respect: but Tintoret, too vivid and true in imagination to be able to endure the common thoughts of hell, represents indeed the wicked in ruin, but not in agony. They are swept down by flood and whirlwind—the place of them shall know them no more, but not one is seen in more than the natural pain of swift and irrevocable death.

III. I pass to the third condition; the priority of flesh to spirit, and of the body to the face.

\* The upper photograph in S. 50 is, however, not taken from the great Paradise, which is in too dark a position to be photographed, but from a study of it existing in a private gallery, and every way inferior. I have vainly tried to photograph portions of the picture itself.

In this alone, of the four innovations, Michael Angelo and Tintoret have the Greeks with them ;—in this, alone, have they any right to be called classical. The Greeks gave them no excuse for bad workmanship ; none for temporary passion ; none for the preference of pain. Only in the honour done to the body may be alleged for them the authority of the ancients.

You remember, I hope, how often in my preceding lectures I had to insist on the fact that Greek sculpture was essentially ἀπρόσωπος ;—independent, not only of the expression, but even of the beauty of the face. Nay, independent of its being so much as seen. The greater number of the finest pieces of it which remain for us to judge by, have had the heads broken away ;—we do not seriously miss them either from the Three Fates, the Ilissus, or the Torso of the Vatican. The face of the Theseus is so far destroyed by time that you can form little conception of its former aspect. But it is otherwise in Christian sculpture. Strike the head off even the rudest statue in the porch of Chartres and you will greatly miss it—the harm would be still worse to Donatello's St. George :—and if you take the heads from a statue of Mino, or a painting of Angelico—very little but drapery will be left ;—drapery made redundant in quantity and rigid in fold, that it may conceal the forms, and give a proud

or ascetic reserve to the actions, of the bodily frame. Bellini and his school, indeed, rejected at once the false theory, and the easy mannerism, of such religious design ; and painted the body without fear or reserve, as, in its subordination, honourable and lovely. But the inner heart and fire of it are by them always first thought of, and no action is given to it merely to show its beauty. Whereas the great culminating masters, and chiefly of these, Tintoret, Correggio, and Michael Angelo, delight in the body for its own sake, and cast it into every conceivable attitude, often in violation of all natural probability, that they may exhibit the action of its skeleton, and the contours of its flesh. The movement of a hand with Cima or Bellini expresses mental emotion only ; but the clustering and twining of the fingers of Correggio's St. Catherine is enjoyed by the painter just in the same way as he would enjoy the twining of the branches of a graceful plant, and he compels them into intricacies which have little or no relation to St. Catherine's mind. In the two drawings of Correggio, (S. 13 and 14,) it is the rounding of limbs and softness of foot resting on cloud which are principally thought of in the form of the Madonna ; and the countenance of St. John is foreshortened into a section, that full prominence may be given to the muscles of his arms and breast.

So in Tintoret's drawing of the Graces (S. 22), he

has entirely neglected the individual character of the Goddesses, and been content to indicate it merely by attributes of dice or flower, so only that he may sufficiently display varieties of contour in thigh and shoulder.

Thus far then, the Greeks, Correggio, Michael Angelo, Raphael, in his latter design, and Tintoret, in his scenic design, (as opposed to portraiture) are at one. But the Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, are also together in this farther point ; that they all draw the body for true delight in it, and with knowledge of it living ; while Michael Angelo and Raphael draw the body for vanity, and from knowledge of it dead.

The Venus of Melos,—Correggio's Venus, (with Mercury teaching Cupid to read),—and Tintoret's Graces, have the forms which their designers truly *liked* to see in women. They may have been wrong or right in liking those forms, but they carved and painted them for their pleasure, not for vanity.

But the form of Michael Angelo's Night is not one which he delighted to see in women. He gave it her, because he thought it was fine, and that he would be admired for reaching so lofty an ideal.\*

Again. The Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, learn

\* He had, indeed, other and more solemn thoughts of the Night than Correggio ; and these he tried to express by distorting form, and making her partly Medusa-like. In this lecture, as above stated, I am only dwelling on points hitherto unnoticed of dangerous evil in the too much admired master.

the body from the living body, and delight in its breath, colour, and motion.\*

Raphael and Michael Angelo learned it essentially from the corpse, and had no delight in it whatever, but great pride in showing that they knew all its mechanism ; they therefore sacrifice its colours, and insist on its muscles, and surrender the breath and fire of it, for what is—not merely carnal,—but osseous, knowing that for one person who can recognize the loveliness of a look, or the purity of a colour, there are a hundred who can calculate the length of a bone.

The boy with the doves, in Raphael's cartoon of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, is not a child running, but a surgical diagram of a child in a running posture.

Farther, when the Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, draw the body active, it is because they rejoice in its force, and when they draw it inactive, it is because they rejoice in its repose. But Michael Angelo and Raphael invent for it ingenious mechanical motion, because they think it uninteresting when it is quiet, and cannot, in their pictures, endure any person's being simple-minded enough to stand upon both his legs at once, nor venture to imagine

\* Tintoret dissected, and used clay models, in the true academical manner, and produced academical results thereby ; but all his fine work is done from life, like that of the Greeks.



any one's being clear enough in his language to make himself intelligible without pointing.

In all these conditions, the Greek and Venetian treatment of the body is faithful, modest, and natural; but Michael Angelo's dishonest, insolent, and artificial.

But between him and Tintoret there is a separation deeper than all these, when we examine their treatment of the face. Michael Angelo's vanity of surgical science rendered it impossible for him ever to treat the body as well as the Greeks treated it; but it left him wholly at liberty to treat the face as ill; and he did: and in some respects very curiously worse.

The Greeks had, in all their work, one type of face for beautiful and honourable persons; and another, much contrary to it, for dishonourable ones; and they were continually setting these in opposition. Their type of beauty lay chiefly in the undisturbed peace and simplicity of all contours; in full roundness of chin; in perfect formation of the lips, showing neither pride nor care; and, most of all, in a straight and firm line from the brow to the end of the nose.

The Greek type of dishonourable persons, especially satyrs, fauns, and sensual powers, consisted in irregular excrescence and decrement of features, especially in flatness of the upper part of the nose, and projection of the end of it into a blunt knob.

By the most grotesque fatality, as if the personal

bodily injury he had himself received had passed with a sickly echo into his mind also, Michael Angelo is always dwelling on this satyric form of countenance ; —sometimes violently caricatures it, but never can help drawing it ; and all the best profiles in this collection at Oxford have what Mr. Robinson calls a “ nez retroussé ;” but what is, in reality, the nose of the Greek Bacchic mask, treated as a dignified feature.

For the sake of readers who cannot examine the drawings themselves, and lest I should be thought to have exaggerated in any wise the statement of this character, I quote Mr. Robinson’s description of the head, No. 9—a celebrated and entirely authentic drawing,—(on which, I regret to say, my own pencil comment in passing is merely “ brutal lower lip, and broken nose : ”)—

“ This admirable study was probably made from nature, additional character and more powerful expression having been given to it by a slight exaggeration of details, bordering on caricature (observe the protruding lower lip, ‘ nez retroussé,’ and overhanging forehead). The head, in profile, turned to the right, is proudly planted on a massive neck and shoulders, and the short tufted hair stands up erect. The expression is that of fierce, insolent self-confidence and malevolence ; it is engraved in facsimile in Ottley’s ‘ Italian School of Design,’ and it is described in that work p. 33, as ‘ Finely expressive of scornfulness and pride, and evidently a study from nature.’

"Michel Angelo has made use of the same ferocious-looking model on other occasions—see an instance in the well-known 'Head of Satan' engraved in Woodburn's Lawrence Gallery (No. 16), and now in the Malcolm Collection.

"The study on the reverse of the leaf is more slightly executed ; it represents a man of powerful frame, carrying a hog or boar in his arms before him, the upper part of his body thrown back to balance the weight, his head hidden by that of the animal, which rests on the man's right shoulder.

"The power displayed in every line and touch of these drawings is inimitable—the head was in truth one of the 'teste divine,' and the hand which executed it the 'mano terribile,' so enthusiastically alluded to by Vasari."

Passing, for the moment, by No. 10, a "young woman of majestic character, marked by a certain expression of brooding melancholy," and "wearing on her head a fantastic cap or turban ;"—by No. 11, a bearded man, "wearing a conical Phrygian cap, his mouth wide open," and his expression "obstreperously animated ;"—and by No. 12, "a middle-aged or old man, with a snub nose, high forehead, and thin, scrubby hair," we will go on to the fairer examples of Divine heads in No. 32.

"This splendid sheet of studies is probably one of the 'carte stupendissime di teste divine,' which Vasari says (Vita, p. 272) Michel Angelo executed, as presents or lessons for his artistic friends. Not improbably it is actually one of those made for his friend Tommaso dei



Cavalieri, who, when young, was desirous of learning to draw."

But it is one of the chief misfortunes affecting Michael Angelo's reputation, that his ostentatious display of strength and science has a natural attraction for comparatively weak and pedantic persons. And this sheet of Vasari's "teste divine" contains, in fact, not a single drawing of high quality—only one of moderate agreeableness, and two caricatured heads, one of a satyr with hair like the fur of animals, and one of a monstrous and sensual face, such as could only have occurred to the sculptor in a fatigued dream, and which in my own notes I have classed with the vile face in No 45.

Returning, however, to the divine heads above it, I wish you to note "the most conspicuous and important of all," a study for one of the Genii behind the Sibylla Libyca. This Genius, like the young woman of a majestic character, and the man with his mouth open, wears a cap, or turban; opposite to him in the sheet, is a female in profile, "wearing a hood of massive drapery." And, when once your attention is directed to this point, you will perhaps be surprised to find how many of Michael Angelo's figures, intended to be sublime, have their heads bandaged. If you have been a student of Michael Angelo chiefly,

you may easily have vitiated your taste to the extent of thinking that this is a dignified costume ; but if you study Greek work, instead, you will find that nothing is more important in the system of it than a finished disposition of the hair ; and as soon as you acquaint yourself with the execution of carved marbles generally, you will perceive these massy fillets to be merely a cheap means of getting over a difficulty too great for Michael Angelo's patience, and too exigent for his invention. They are not sublime arrangements, but economies of labour, and reliefs from the necessity of design ; and if you had proposed to the sculptor of the Venus of Melos, or of the Jupiter of Olympia, to bind the ambrosial locks up in towels, you would most likely have been instantly bound, yourself ; and sent to the nearest temple of Æsculapius.

I need not, surely, tell you,—I need only remind,—how in all these points, the Venetians and Correggio reverse Michael Angelo's evil, and vanquish him in good ; how they refuse caricature, rejoice in beauty, and thirst for opportunity of toil. The waves of hair in a single figure of Tintoret's, (the Mary Magdalene of the Paradise) contain more intellectual design in themselves alone than all the folds of unseemly linen in the Sistine chapel put together.

In the fourth and last place, as Tintoret does not sacrifice, except as he is forced by the exi-

gences of display, the face for the body, so also he does not sacrifice happiness for pain. The chief reason why we all know the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo, and not the "Paradise" of Tintoret, is the same love of sensation which makes us read the *Inferno* of Dante, and not his *Paradise*; and the choice, believe me, is our fault, not his; some farther evil influence is due to the fact that Michael Angelo has invested all his figures with picturesque and palpable elements of effect, while Tintoret has only made them lovely in themselves and has been content that they should deserve, not demand, your attention.

You are accustomed to think the figures of Michael Angelo sublime—because they are dark, and colossal, and involved, and mysterious—because in a word, they look sometimes like shadows, and sometimes like mountains, and sometimes like spectres, but never like human beings. Believe me, yet once more, in what I told you long since—man can invent nothing nobler than humanity. He cannot raise his form into anything better than God made it, by giving it either the flight of birds or strength of beasts, by enveloping it in mist, or heaping it into multitude. Your pilgrim must look like a pilgrim in a straw hat, or you will not make him into one with cockle and nimbus; an angel must look like an angel on the ground, as well as in the air; and the

much-denounced pre-Raphaelite faith that a saint cannot look saintly unless he has thin legs, is not more absurd than Michael Angelo's, that a Sibyl cannot look Sibylline unless she has thick ones.

All that shadowing, storming, and coiling of his, when you look into it, is mere stage decoration, and that of a vulgar kind. Light is, in reality, more awful than darkness—modesty more majestic than strength; and there is truer sublimity in the sweet joy of a child, or the sweet virtue of a maiden, than in the strength of Antæus, or thunder-clouds of Ætna.

Now, though in nearly all his greater pictures, Tintoret is entirely carried away by his sympathy with Michael Angelo, and conquers him in his own field;—outflies him in motion, outnumbers him in multitude, outwits him in fancy, and outflames him in rage,—he can be just as gentle as he is strong: and that Paradise, though it is the largest picture in the world, without any question, is also the thoughtfullest, and most precious.

The Thoughtfullest!—it would be saying but little, as far as Michael Angelo is concerned.

For consider of it yourselves. You have heard, from your youth up, (and all educated persons have heard for three centuries), of this Last Judgment of his, as the most sublime picture in existence.

The subject of it is one which should certainly be interesting to you, in one of two ways.

If you never expect to be judged for any of your own doings, and the tradition of the coming of Christ is to you as an idle tale—still, think what a wonderful tale it would be, were it well told. You are at liberty, disbelieving it, to range the fields—Elysian and Tartarean, of all imagination. You may play with it, since it is false; and what a play would it not be, well written? Do you think the tragedy, or the miracle play, or the infinitely Divina Commedia of the Judgment of the astonished living who were dead;—the undeceiving of the sight of every human soul, understanding in an instant all the shallow, and depth of past life and future,—face to face with both,—and with God:—this apocalypse to all intellect, and completion to all passion, this minute and individual drama of the perfected history of separate spirits, and of their finally accomplished affections!—think you, I say, all this was well told by mere heaps of dark bodies curled and convulsed in space, and fall as of a crowd from a scaffolding, in writhed concretions of muscular pain?

But take it the other way. Suppose you believe, be it never so dimly or feebly, in some kind of Judgment that is to be;—that you admit even the faint contingency of retribution, and can imagine, with vivacity enough to fear, that in this life, at all events, if not in another—there may be for you a Visitation of God, and a questioning—What hast thou



done? The picture, if it is a good one, should have a deeper interest, surely on *this* postulate? Thrilling enough, as a mere imagination of what is never to be—now, as a conjecture of what *is* to be, held the best that in eighteen centuries of Christianity has for men's eyes been made ;—Think of it so !

And then, tell me, whether you yourselves, or any one you have known, did ever at any time receive from this picture any, the smallest vital thought, warning, quickening, or help? It may have appalled, or impressed you for a time, as a thunder-cloud might : but has it ever taught you anything—chastised in you anything—confirmed a purpose—fortified a resistance—purified a passion? I know that for you, it has done none of these things ; and I know also that, for others, it has done very different things. In every vain and proud designer who has since lived, that dark carnality of Michael Angelo's has fostered insolent science, and fleshly imagination. Daubers and blockheads think themselves painters, and are received by the public as such, if they know how to foreshorten bones and decipher entrails ; and men with capacity of art either shrink away (the best of them always do) into petty felicities and innocencies of genre painting—landscapes, cattle, family breakfasts, village schoolings, and the like ; or else, if they have the full sensuous art-faculty that would have made true painters of them, being taught, from



their youth up, to look for and learn the body instead of the spirit, have learned it, and taught it to such purpose, that at this hour, when I speak to you, the rooms of the Royal Academy of England, receiving also what of best can be sent there by the masters of France, contain *not one* picture honourable to the arts of their age; and contain many which are shameful in their record of its manners.

Of that, hereafter. I will close to-day by giving you some brief account of the scheme of Tintoret's Paradise, in justification of my assertion that it is the thoughtfullest as well as mightiest picture in the world.

In the highest centre is Christ, leaning on the globe of the earth, which is of dark crystal. Christ is crowned with a glory as of the sun, and all the picture is lighted by that glory, descending through circle beneath circle of cloud, and of flying or throned spirits.

The Madonna, beneath Christ, and at some interval from Him, kneels to Him. She is crowned with the Seven stars, and kneels on a cloud of angels, whose wings change into ruby fire, where they are near her.

The three great Archangels meeting from three sides, fly towards Christ. Michael delivers up his scales and sword. He is followed by the Thrones and Principalities of the Earth; so inscribed—Throni

—*Principatus*. The Spirits of the Thrones bear scales in their hands ; and of the Princedoms, shining globes : beneath the wings of the last of these are the four great teachers and lawgivers, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Augustine, and behind St. Augustine stands his mother, watching him, her chief joy in Paradise.

Under the Thrones, are set the Apostles, St. Paul separated a little from the rest, and put lowest, yet principal ; under St. Paul, is St. Christopher, bearing a massive globe, with a cross upon it : but to mark him as the Christ-bearer, since here in Paradise he cannot have the child on his shoulders, Tintoret has thrown on the globe a flashing stellar reflection of the sun round the head of Christ.

All this side of the picture is kept in glowing colour,—the four Doctors of the church have golden mitres and mantles ; except the Cardinal, St. Jerome, who is in burning scarlet, his naked breast glowing, warm with noble life,—the darker red of his robe relieved against a white glory.

Opposite to Michael, Gabriel flies towards the Madonna, having in his hand the Annunciation lily, large, and triple-blossomed. Above him, and above Michael, equally, extends a cloud of white angels, inscribed “*Serafini* ;” but the group following Gabriel, and corresponding to the *Throni* following Michael, is inscribed “*Cherubini*.” Under these are

the great prophets, and singers and foretellers of the happiness or of the sorrow of time. David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and Amos of the herdsmen. David has a colossal golden psaltery laid horizontally across his knees ;—two angels behind him dictate to him as he sings, looking up towards Christ ; but one strong angel sweeps down to Solomon from among the cherubs, and opens a book, resting it on the head of Solomon, who looks down earnestly, unconscious of it ;—to the left of David, separate from the group of prophets, as Paul from the apostles, is Moses, dark-robed ;—in the full light, withdrawn far behind him, Abraham, embracing Isaac with his left arm, and near him, pale St. Agnes. In front, nearer, dark and colossal, stands the glorious figure of Santa Giustina of Padua ; then a little subordinate to her, St. Catherine, and, far on the left, and high, St. Barbara leaning on her tower. In front, nearer, flies Raphael ; and under him is the four-square group of the Evangelists. Beneath them, on the left, Noah ; on the right, Adam and Eve, both floating unsupported by cloud or angel ; Noah buoyed by the Ark, which he holds above him, and it is *this* into which Solomon gazes down, so earnestly. Eve's face is, perhaps, the most beautiful ever painted by Tintoret—full in light, but dark-eyed. Adam floats beside her, his figure fading into a winged gloom, edged in the outline of fig-leaves.

Far down, under these, central in the lowest part of the picture, rises the Angel of the Sea, praying for Venice; for Tintoret conceives his Paradise as existing now, not as in the future. I at first mistook this soft Angel of the Sea for the Magdalene, for he is sustained by other three angels on either side, as the Magdalen is, in designs of earlier time, because of the verse, "There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth." But the Magdalen is on the right, behind St. Monica; and on the same side, but lowest of all, Rachel, among the angels of her children, gathered now again to her for ever.

I have no hesitation in asserting this picture to be by far the most precious work of art of any kind whatsoever, now existing in the world; and it is, I believe, on the eve of final destruction; for it is said that the angle of the great council-chamber is soon to be rebuilt; and that process will involve the destruction of the picture by removal, and, far more, by repainting. I had thought of making some effort to save it by an appeal in London to persons generally interested in the arts; but the recent desolation of Paris has familiarized us with destruction, and I have no doubt the answer to me would be, that Venice must take care of her own. But remember, at least, that I have borne witness to you to-day of the treasures that we forget, while we amuse our-

selves with the poor toys, and the petty, or vile, arts, of our own time.

The years of that time have perhaps come, when we are to be taught to look no more to the dreams of painters, either for knowledge of Judgment, or of Paradise. The anger of Heaven will not longer, I think, be mocked for our amusement; and perhaps its love may not always be despised by our pride. Believe me, all the arts, and all the treasures of men, are fulfilled and preserved to them only, so far as they have chosen first, with their hearts, not the curse of God, but His blessing. Our Earth is now encumbered with ruin, our Heaven is clouded by Death. May we not wisely judge ourselves in some things now, instead of amusing ourselves with the painting of judgments to come?

THE END.

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